

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

USSS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

ACDA-19 IO-14 A-01 OPR-02 SY-10 EUR-25 DRC-01 /147 W

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O R 231315Z OCT 73

FM USINT CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4102

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN

CONFIDENTIAL CAIRO 3221

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS EG IS

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN MILITARY SITUATION: REPORT BY

DE BORCHGRAVE

1. DE BORCHGRAVE HAS GIVEN US BRIEFING FOLLOWING RETURN FROM 24-HOUR VISIT TO EGYPTIAN FRONT. AS REPORTED ELSEWHERE, VISIT WAS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR FAYID AREA. IN FACT, DE BORCHGRAVE WAS TAKEN NOWHERE NEAR FAYID. HIS JEEP WAS DIVERTED NORTH FROM ISMAILIYA ROAD AT A POINT TO THE WEST OF ABU SUWEIR AND WITH LITTLE EXPLANATION AS TO WHY HE WAS TAKEN TO KANTARA. HE THEN PROCEEDED TO A POINT WHICH HE BELIEVES WAS NO MORE THAN SIX MILES EAST OF KANTARA, ALTHOUGH EGYPTIAN BRIGADIER GENERAL GUIDE SAID THAT THEY WERE 20 KILOMETERS EAST OF CANAL.

2. AT POINT OF MAXIMUM PENETRATION, DE BORCHGRAVE'S JEEP BREASTED A RISE ONLY TO FACE AN ISRAELI CENTURION TANK WHICH PROCEEDED TO LET OFF SEVERAL SHELLS IN HIS DIRECTION AT POINT-BLANK RANGE. JEEP REVERSED, RETURNED TO SECOND LINE

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OF EGYPTIAN DEFENSE AND AS DE BORCHGRAVE DESCRIBED IT, HE

AND COLLEAGUES WERE BARELY ABLE TO JUMP INTO NEARBY FOXHOLE WHEN PHANTOMS ARRIVED. DE BORCHGRAVE STATES HE WAS BOMBED BY PHANTOMS AND SHELLED BY IDF ARTILLERY FOR HOURS. HE WITNESSED PHANTOM ATTACKS FROM RELATIVELY HIGH ALTITUDE, AND SAW EGYPTIAN SAM'S BEING RELEASED IN GREAT NUMBERS. HE ONLY SAW ONE PHANTOM HIT, AND BELIEVES THAT OTHER SAM'S WERE NOT EFFECTIVE.

3. HE THEN RETURNED TO KANTARA SHORTLY BEFORE ANNOUNCED TIME OF CEASEFIRE. DE BORCHGRAVE STATES THAT WITHIN MINUTES AFTER TIME OF CEASEFIRE, ENTIRE TOWN ERUPTED WITH FIRING FROM VIRTUALLY EVERY DIRECTION. FIRING WAS APPARENTLY NOT DIRECTED AT ISRAELIS (WHO WERE WELL OVER HORIZON) BUT WAS AIMLESS. DE BORCHGRAVE SAYS HE WITNESSED MUTINY WITHIN EGYPTIAN ARMY AT KANTARA FOR 45 MINUTES, WHILE TROOPS AT ALL LEVELS EXPRESSED BITTER PROTEST AT SADAT'S DECISION TO CONCLUDE CEASEFIRE WITH ISRAELIS. FIRING WAS ONLY HALTED AFTER THREAT BY EGYPTIAN AREA COMMANDER TO MORTAR ANY EGYPTIAN TROOPS WHO CONTINUED TO SHOOT.

4. DE BORCHGRAVE RETURNED TO CAIRO AT NOON TODAY, OCTOBER 23, AND PROCEEDED TO GHORBAL'S OFFICE. GHORBAL WAS LIVID AT WHAT HE ASSERTED WAS MASSIVE VIOLATION BY ISRAELIS OF CEASE-FIRE PROVISIONS. DURING NIGHT OF OCTOBER 22-23 THEY HAD PUSHED ENORMOUS QUANTITIES OF EQUIPMENT ACROSS CANAL NEAR ISMAILIYA AND GREAT BITTER LAKE AND HAD THROUGHOUT MORNING SUCCEEDED IN CONSIDERABLY STRENGTHENING THEIR POSITION ON WEST BANK.

5. GHORBAL BLAMED US. HE SAID HE COULD ONLY CONCLUDE THAT ISRAELI VIOLATIONS WERE DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER'S VISIT TO TEL AVIV. HE LATER MODIFIED THIS TO SUGGEST ANOTHER EXPLANATION, THAT ISRAELIS THEMSELVES DID NOT GIVE A DAMN ABOUT WHAT US THOUGHT OR DID NOW THAT US RESUPPLY HAD MORE THAN MADE UP FOR LOSSES SUFFERED IN WAR. GHORBAL SAID THAT RUSSIANS SEEMED UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING AND PHYSICALLY COULD NOT MATCH US RESUPPLY EFFORT.

6. FOR DEPARTMENT: DE BORCHGRAVE ASKS THAT NEWSWEEK HEAD OFFICE BE INFORMED OF HIS RETURN TO CAIRO.

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 23 OCT 1973
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Disposition Authority: morefirh
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Disposition Reason:
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